

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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P R 042056Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5598
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

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E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS PINT, AR
SUBJECT JUNTA DESIGNATES VIDELA PRESIDENT UNTIL MARCH 1981

REF: BUENOS AIRES 3342

1. AS ANTICIPATED REFTTEL, A COMMUNIQUE WAS
ISSUED AT THE END OF THE JUNTA MEETING EARLY
EVENING OF MAY 2 PROCLAIMING THAT THE JUNTA
HAD UNANIMOUSLY SELECTED GENERAL VIDEA TO
CONTINUE AS PRESIDENT DURING THE SECOND PHASE
OF THE NATIONAL REORGANIZATION PROCESS. THE
COMMUNIQUE PROVIDES AS FOLLOWS:
A. THE EXCEPTIONAL PERIOD DURING WHICH
THE COMMANDER OF THE ARMY HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED
TO EXERCISE THE POSITION OF
PRESIDENT OF THE NATION COMES TO AN END ON AUGUST 1.
B. GENERAL VIDEAL IS DESIGNATED PRESIDENT FOR
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THE PERIOD MARCH 29, 1978 TO MARCH 29, 1981.
EFFECTIVE AUGUST 1, 1978, HE WILL EXERCISE THIS
POSITION AS A RETIRED MILITARY OFFICER, HAVING
TERMINATED HIS MANDATE AS ARMY COMMANDER SOME TIME
BEFORE THAT DATE.
C. THE PERTINENT ORGANIZATIONS WILL STUDY AND
PROPOSE, PRIOR TO JULY 15, 1978, THE DETAILS RELATING

TO THE FUNCTIONING OF THE THEME OF POWER (IE
A REFERENCE TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND THE JUNTA).

D. THESE DECISIONS ADOPTED BY THE JUNTA ARE
A NEW DOMONSTRATION OF THE INDESTRUCTIBLE UNITY OF
THE ARMED FORCES (WHO) WILL CONTINUE FIRMLY IN THE
QUEST. . . WHICH WILL MAKE POSSIBLE THE CREATION OF A STABLE,
DYNAMIC AND MODERN DERMOCRACY.

2. DESPITE THE PRESS EMPHASIS ON REGAINED UNITY
AMONG THE THREE SERVICES, IT IS CLEAR THAT MAJOR
ISSUES REMAIN TO BE WORKED OUT. ACCORDING TO PRESS
ACCOUNTS, THE SECRETARIES GENERAL OF THE THREE
SERVICES MET MAY 3 TO BEGIN STUDYING THE "GRAY AREAS"
WHICH REMAIN TO BE CLARIFIED IN TERMS OF THE EXERCISE
OF POWER BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE JUNTA. REPORTEDLY
THE ISSUES TO BE STUDIED INCLUDE THE NORMS RELATING
TO THE REMOVAL OF THE PRESIDENT, HIS POWERS, HIS
TEMPORARY SUBSTITUTE IN CASE OF ABSENCE ABROAD OR
ILLNESS, THE ROLE OF THE LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY COMMISSION
(CAL), ETC. SOME OF THE PAPERS SPECULATED THAT A NEW
DECISION MAKING BODY WOULD BE FORMED IN PRACTICE DURING
THE SECOND TERM OF THE REORGANIZATION PROCESS CONSISTING
OF THE THREE SERVICE CHIEFS AND THE PRESIDENT.

3. THERE ARE ALSO REPORTS THAT A PLAN IS UNDER STUDY TO
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EXPAND THE CABINET BY SPLITTING UP THE SOCIAL WELFARE
MINISTRY AND RAISING THE LEVEL OF SOME OF THE CURRENT DAY
SECRETARIATS IN THE ECONOMY MINISTRY TO THAT OF MINISTRIES
IN THEIR OWN RIGHT. HOWEVER, THE PRESUMPTION IS THAT
THESE STRUCTURE CHANGES WOULD ONLY TAKE PLACE AFTER
MARTINEZ DE HOZ IS NO LONGER MINISTER OF ECONOMY. MARTINEZ
DE HOZ ADDRESSED HIMSELF TO A RELATED PROBLEM WHEN HE
TOLD THE PRESS MAY THERE WAS NO TRUTH TO RUMORS OF
POSSIBLE CHANGES IN THE ECONOMIC TEAM (THESE RUMORS HE
REFERRED TO CENTERED ON THE POSSIBLE REPLACEMENT OF
TREASURY SECRETARY ALMANN AND ECONOMIC COORDINATION
SECRETARY KLEIN).

4. THE PRESS ALSO REPORTED
THE INTENTION OF ADMIRAL MASSERA TO RETIRE IN MID SEPTEMBER
1978 AND THAT OF BRIGADIER AGOSTI TO RETIRE IN JANUARY
1979. THE SELECTION OF A NEW ARMY COMMANDER REPORTEDLY
WOULD ALSO TAKE PLACE "WITHIN A RELATIVELY BRIEF PERIOD."

5. PHOTOGRAPHS RPRMINENTLY DISPLAYED RECENTLY IN
THE MEDIA LEAVE LITTLE DOUBT THAT TODAYS
FRONTRUNNERS FOR THE NEW JUNTA ARE:
GENERAL VIOLA, ADMIRAL LAMBRUSCHINI AND BRIGADIER

GRAFFIGNA (ALTHOUGH VIOLA APPEARS TO HAVE LOST GROUND
RECENTLY VIS A VIS GENERALS SUREZ MESON AND
MENENDEZ AND THERE ARE RUMORS THAT GRAFFIGNA
MAY ONLY HOLD THE TOP AIR FORCE
POST FOR A BRIEF PERIOD.)
CASTRO

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